

**The Passover
in History, Literature and Art.**



THE PASSING GENERATIONS

History of the Passover



AS THE rocks of granite yield to the trained eye of the scientist the secret of their formation, so human institutions, properly examined, present records of growth. Such a story of development, in response to changing social conditions, is displayed by the feast of the Passover.

A. THE FESTIVAL OF THE SHEPHERDS.

Its name **HAG HAPPESEH** harks back to the misty dawn of history. Long before the Exodus, the pastoral tribes of Israel celebrated this festival of the shepherds. As among other pastoral tribes, so among our forefathers, the joyous springtime, with its rich manifestation of fertility through the offspring of the flocks and herds, called forth special festivities. Moses pleaded with Pharaoh in behalf of the Israelites: "Let us go, we pray thee, three days journey in the wilderness, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest He fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword". * When they were refused, the Israelite families offered the **Peseh** sacrifices in their homes in Egypt.

The exact meaning of the name given to this festival and the nature of its ceremonies are matters of conjecture. Its celebration in the early spring, was as-

* Exodus V: 3.

sociated with the sacrifice of the firstlings of the flocks and herds. The modified ordinance regarding its observance in Egypt, as given in Exodus XII, reads: "In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household; and if the household be too little for a lamb, then shall he and his neighbor next unto his house take one according to the number of the souls; according to every man's eating ye shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats; and ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at dusk. And they shall take of the blood, and put it on the two sideposts and on the lintel, upon the house wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; its head with its legs and with the inwards thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; but that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste—it is the Lord's passover."*

Only Israelites and initiated strangers could participate in the Passover. Through the partaking of the sacrificial meat, they sought to strengthen their union with one another and with God, and by means of consecrating their dwellings with the blood of the sacrifice, they hoped to ward off every harm and danger.

The departure of the Israelites from Egypt during

* Exodus XII: 3-11.

the spring festival vested the ancient rite with new historical significance. The name Pesah assumed the meaning of "passing over," of sparing and delivering, and its observance came to be interpreted as a memorial of God's appearance as the avenger of Israel's wrongs. The blood upon the doorposts and lintels was construed to have been a sign upon the homes of the Israelites to distinguish them from those of the Egyptians. Tradition described it as "the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, for that He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses".*

B. THE FARMER'S SPRING FESTIVAL.

With their entrance into Canaan, the shepherd tribes of Israel began to follow agricultural pursuits. Among the older settlers of the land they found the custom of offering to the deity, at the spring of the year, the first fruit of their early harvest. They not only adopted this idea that an offering of their first grain was due to God, but extended it also to the firstlings of their flocks and herds. Thus the Passover sacrifice, while retaining its ancient ceremonials, received the new meaning of being a tribute due to God from the fold. It was also combined with the feast of Matzos or Unleavened Bread, the spring festival of the agricultural Canaanite community, observed in the month of Abib, before the beginning of the harvest season. The important feature of this celebration was the eating of matzos or cakes prepared of unleavened dough. As sacrificial food, it was to be free from leaven.** "It is very probable", writes Dr. Julian Morgenstern, "that among the ancient Canaanites and the early

* Exodus XII: 27.

** Leviticus II: 11; VI: 10.

agricultural Israelites, the custom existed of destroying the usually meager remains of the old crop before the new crop could be used or even harvested. And if this hypothesis be correct, we must see in the ceremonies of the destruction of all leaven, of the fasting before the Matzos-festival and of the eating of the matzos themselves, the religious, sacramental rites by which the last remains of the old crop were destroyed as the necessary preparation for the cutting and eating of the new crop. All of the old crop was thus burned except just enough to prepare the matzos for the festival."*

The later law, as given in Leviticus XXIII:5ff, combines the pastoral and agricultural elements of the feast. It reads: "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at dusk, is the Lord's pass-over. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord; seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread". On the second day of the feast, the barley harvest was ushered in by bringing a sheaf of the new crop unto the priest. "And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you... And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor fresh ears, until this selfsame day, until ye have brought the offering of your God." From that day forty-nine days were counted, and the fiftieth was observed as Shabuoth (Feast of Weeks) or as Hag Habikkurim, the "feast of the first fruits". (In the orthodox synagogues the seven weeks between the first day of Pesah and Shabuoth are still known as the season of S'firath Ho'omer, of "counting the sheaf".)

In the light of the association of the feast of Matzos with that of Pesah, the eating of the matzos was re-interpreted as a reminder of the hurried flight of the

Israelites from Egypt. Exodus XII:39 states: "And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual".

C. THE FEAST OF ISRAEL'S BIRTH.

It was the tradition of the Exodus that vitalized the old Pesah and Matzos festivals, and welded them into a distinctly Jewish institution, rich in ethical and religious possibilities. The national consciousness lovingly dwelt upon the fact that:

"When Israel came forth out of Egypt,
The house of Jacob from a people of strange
language,
Judah became His sanctuary,
Israel His dominion."*

The hour which marked the birth of Israel as a holy nation, eloquently demonstrated to the religious mind the love of God for Israel. Prophetic idealism transformed this belief into a powerful lever of spiritual progress. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians", resounded the voice of God, "and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will hearken unto My voice indeed and keep My covenant, then ye shall be Mine own treasure from among all peoples; for all the earth is Mine; and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."** The belief in God's choice of Israel, determined Israel's mission in the world. The high privilege imposed great responsibility.

* Psalm CXIV: 1-2.

** Exodus XIX: 4-5.

* The American Journal of Theology, vol. XXI, p. 288.

As the people chosen by God, in accordance with His plan of the universal salvation of mankind, Israel must keep faith with God and be "a covenant of the people" and "a light of the nations:

To open the blind eyes,

To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,

And them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house".*

The conviction that Israel was delivered from its low estate to become the deliverer of the nations from moral and spiritual slavery, led to the comforting Divine assurance:

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee,

And through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee;

When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned,

Neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

For I am the Lord thy God,

The Holy One of Israel, thy Savior;

I have given Egypt as thy ransom,

Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

Since thou art precious in My sight, and honorable,

And I have loved thee;

Therefore will I give men for thee,

And peoples for thy life.

Fear not, for I am with thee."**

D. THE NATIONAL CELEBRATION.

(1) *The Passover During the Second Temple.*

As the feast of Israel's independence, the Passover

*Isaiah XLII: 6-7.

**Isaiah XLIII: 2-5.

steadily grew in the hearts of the people. It gained new power, when subsequent to the Deuteronomic reformation, under King Josiah (621 B.C.E.), the Passover sacrifices, like all other offerings, had to be brought to the national sanctuary at Jerusalem. During the entire period of the Second Temple the Passover celebration served as a strong influence in the unification of Israel. Josephus refers to the great alacrity with which the Jewish people celebrated the Passover, and states that on it "they are required to slay more sacrifices in number than at any other festival". He also points out that "an innumerable multitude came thither out of the country, nay, from beyond its limits also, in order to worship God". He estimates that one year, shortly before the fall of the Temple, the number of sacrifices reached 256,500, which, upon the allowance of ten to each sacrifice, together with the considerable number of foreigners and of Jews who were prevented from partaking of the Passover on account of bodily uncleanness,* made the vast crowd that thronged the holy city upward of 2,700,200.

(2) *The Passover Sacrifice.***

For many days before the Passover, the people would come from every village and hamlet to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread in Jerusalem. By the fourteenth of Nisan the houses were crowded with guests, the open spaces were dotted with tents and the streets filled with the joyous pilgrims. Beneath the merry-making, ran an undercurrent of earnest haste, for the great feast was close at hand. The houses were being

*Those that were prevented from performing their duty on the 14th of Nisan were allowed to offer the Passover sacrifice on the 14th of Iyar. See Numbers IX: 9-14.

**According to the Mishnah Pesahim.

cleaned of leaven, and special ovens were being prepared for the roasting of the paschal lambs.

Frequently in the midst of their labors, the people would look up to the Temple mount, where on one of the Temple galleries lay two sacrificial loaves, which served as a signal to them. As long as the priests allowed these loaves to remain, leavened bread could still be kept in the houses. But soon one loaf was removed, and then immediately afterwards the second loaf was taken away. At that signal fires leaped up all over the city. The last leaven was being burnt. For seven days thereafter only unleavened bread would be found in all the habitations of Israel.

Now the seventh hour of the day had passed and the regular daily offering had already been brought up. The time for the sacrifice of the paschal offering itself had come. Great throngs of people pressed against the gates of the Temple, each man leading his sacrificial lamb. Soon the gates were opened but only one-third of the throng was admitted. As they poured into the Temple courts, they beheld three rows of priests extending across the sacred precinct. The first and last rows carried silver basins, the intervening carried basins of gold. The first man carried his lamb to the altar where it was sacrificed. The blood was caught in one of the basins and handed from priest to priest, each one receiving the empty basin in return for the filled one. Thus with very little delay, all the sacrifices were completed. While these sacrifices were being performed, the Levites chanted aloud the Hallel Psalms, the people responding in unison. After the first group of pilgrims completed its sacrifices, the second group was admitted, and then the third. When all the sacrifices were over, the people went to their houses and proceeded to roast the paschal lamb and make all pre-

parations for the great Seder service, which was to take place in every home that evening.

E. THE FEAST OF FREEDOM.

During the centuries of Roman oppression, when the Jewish people groaned under the crushing burden of the Caesars, even as did their forefathers in Egypt, the ancient Feast of Freedom was charged with new vitality. Its annual recurrence came like a summons to new life and to liberty, making each Israelite feel as if he personally had shared in the Exodus. This sentiment was fostered by the new ritual for the home which replaced the Passover sacrifice after the Temple and the altar had been destroyed. While the Seder service was commemorative of the sacrificial rites at the Temple (the roast bone representing the paschal lamb, and the egg the additional festive offerings, the *Hagigah*), it was essentially propagandist in nature. The recital of the story of the Exodus was calculated to awaken the national consciousness. It became a duty to tell the young and to rehearse to one another the tale of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. To dwell at length on it was considered praiseworthy. During the Hadrianic persecution, we find Rabbi Akiba, the moving spirit in Bar Cochba's heroic struggle to regain the independence of the Jewish people, together with other leaders in Israel, at B'nai B'rak, absorbed in the story of the Exodus all night, looking to the fulfillment of the prophetic promise to Israel:

As in the days of thy coming forth out of the land of Egypt

Will I show unto him marvelous things.*

* Micah VII, 15.

Commemorating the deliverance from Egyptian bondage ("Pesah Mitzrayim"), the Passover held out the promise of the future redemption from Roman bondage ("Pesah L'osid"). Another belief, too, became current that God's anointed (the Messiah) would appear on the anniversary of Israel's liberation, to reestablish the fallen tabernacle of David. Several self-deluded men, under the spell of this belief, proclaimed themselves as the long expected Messiahs. Thus in all ages, the Passover proved to be a perennial source of hope. Celebrating it, the Jewish people defied their ever new Pharaohs and Caesars, declaring prayerfully: "This year we are slaves; next year may we be free men". To souls crushed with anguish the "Z'man Herusenu—the season of our liberation" held out the promise of the coming day when all fetters of oppression would be broken, when the clouds of religious bigotry and racial prejudice and hatred would be dispelled by the dawning light of God's truth, and when Israel's dormant powers would awaken to new life and blossom forth in renewed glory.

THE ETHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PASSOVER.

Israel's experience was unique from the first when it departed from Egypt. Again and again races have been subjugated, reduced to slavery or villenage; but does history know of another horde of slaves that recovered itself, regained freedom, reestablished its own civilization, its own government? It is eminently proper, therefore, that in the prophetic as well as the Rabbinic cycle of ideas the Exodus from Egypt should occupy a prominent place. Its importance had been recognized still earlier, in the code, the Torah. The most exalted moral statutes concerning the treatment of strangers are connected with the Exodus, and

are, from a psychologic point of view, impressively inculcated by means of the reminder: "Ye know the heart of the stranger!"* It is remarkable how even the law of the Sabbath rest, at first sight unconnected with the story of Israel's slavery and redemption, is brought into relation with and illuminated by it. The fourth commandment in the second version of the Ten Commandments, in Deuteronomy, disregards the dogmatic reason attached to the first ("for in six days the Lord made" etc).** It emphasizes the ethical motive, that the manservant and the maid-servant should be granted a day of rest, and employs the memory of the Egyptian experience to urge consideration for subordinates. This method, characteristic of the Bible and still more of the Rabbis, of establishing a connection between the most important moral laws and the history of Israel in Egypt, at the same time illustrates how nations should draw instruction from their fortunes.

The Prophets and Psalmists employ the great historical event to give reality chiefly to the religious idea of God's providence and grace. The Rabbis, finally, deduce from it the two fundamental elements of man's ethical education: the notion of liberty and the notion of man's ethical task.

Political and even civil freedom was lost. The Roman Pharaohs, if they did not exact labor, the more despotically exacted property and blood, and aimed at the annihilation of ideal possessions—the Law, its study, and its execution. Yet the notion of liberty, inner moral and spiritual liberty, cherished as a pure, exalted ideal, possible only under and through the Law, was associated with the memory of the redemption

* Exodus XXIII: 9.

** Exodus XX: 11.

from Egyptian slavery, and this memory in turn was connected with symbolic practices accompanying every act, pleasure, and celebration.

Moritz Lazarus,
The Ethics of Judaism, Part 1, p. 231-2 and 29.



MOSES AND THE TABLES OF THE LAW

Moses

"How small Sinai appears when Moses stands upon it! This mountain is only the pedestal for the feet of the man whose head reaches up to the heavens, where he speaks with God."

The artistic spirit was directed by Moses, "as by his Egyptian compatriots, to colossal and indestructible undertakings. He built human pyramids, carved human obelisks; he took a poor shepherd family and created a nation from it—a great eternal, holy people; a people of God, destined to outlive the centuries, and to serve as pattern to all other nations, even as a prototype to the whole of mankind. He created Israel," . . . a people that has "fought and suffered on every battlefield of human thought."

Heinrich Heine

To lead into freedom a people long crushed by tyranny; to discipline and order such a mighty host; to harden them into fighting men, before whom warlike tribes quailed and walled cities went down; to repress discontent and jealousy and mutiny; to combat reactions and reversions; to turn the quick, fierce flame of enthusiasm to the service of a steady purpose, require some towering character—a character blending in highest expression the qualities of politician, patriot, philosopher, and statesman—the union of the wisdom of the Egyptians with the unselfish devotion of the meekest of men.

The striking differences between Egyptian and Hebrew polity are not of form but of essence. The tendency of the one is to subordination and oppression; of the other, to individual freedom. Strangest of recorded birth! From

the strongest and most splendid despotism of antiquity comes the freest republic. From between the paws of the rock-hewn Sphinx rises the genius of human liberty, and the trumpets of the Exodus throb with the defiant proclamation of the rights of man. . . In the characteristics of the Mosaic institutions, as in the fragments of a Colossus, we may read the greatness of the mind whose impress they bear — of a mind in advance of its surroundings, in advance of its age; of one of those star souls that dwindle not with distance, but, glowing with the radiance of essential truth, hold their light while institutions and languages and creeds change and pass.

Leader and servant of men! Law-giver and benefactor! Toiler towards the Promised Land seen only by the eye of faith! Type of the high souls who in every age have given to earth its heroes and its martyrs, whose deeds are the precious possession of the race, whose memories are its sacred heritage! With whom among the founders of Empire shall we compare him?

To dispute about the inspiration of such a man were to dispute about words. From the depths of the Unseen such characters must draw their strength; from fountains that flow only for the pure in heart must come their wisdom. Of something more real than matter, of something higher than the stars, of a light that will endure when suns are dead and dark, of a purpose of which the physical universe is but a passing phase, such lives tell.

Henry George, Lecture on Moses, 1884



Preparations For The Passover

A. TIME OF THE FEAST.

Though the Bible calls for the observance of Passover for seven days, the changing conditions of Jewish life before the fall of Jerusalem (70 C.E.) produced an eighth day of the Feast. As the calendar was not yet established, the Sanhedrin, exercising its religious authority, proclaimed each New Moon ("Rosh Hodesh"), and thereby regulated the dates of the festivals. However, its decisions were not always conveyed to the distant Jewish settlements in time to celebrate the holy days at the right season. To obviate this difficulty, the Jewish communities, outside of Palestine, added an extra day to each festival. When a permanent calendar was finally framed by Hillel II, in 360 C.E., and the dates of the holy days were no longer in doubt, the Rabbis of Babylonia wished to drop the second day of festivals, but they were advised by the Palestinian authorities not to break an established custom. Reform Judaism, recognizing that this custom causes needless hardship to Jewish people, in commercial and industrial centers, abolished the second day of festivals. Accordingly reform Jews, following the biblical law, keep Passover seven days, beginning on the eve of the 15th and ending on the 21st of Nisan. The first and last days are holy days on which divine services are held in the synagogues. The intervening days, known as "Hol Hamoed" are half-holy days.

B. MATZO-BAKING.

With the cessation of the sacrificial cult the original distinction between the feast of Pesah and that of Matzos disappeared to all practical purposes. The prominent feature of the feast came to be the eating of matzo. "The eating of matzo during Passover, unlike the prohibition against eating *ḥometz*, is not imperative; it is a voluntary act ('*r'shus*'). That is, a Jew may abstain from eating both *ḥometz* and matzo, except on the first eve, when the eating of matzo is obligatory ('*ḥovoh*'). Matzo may be made of flour of wheat, barley, spelt, oats, or rye. Special care must be exercised in kneading and baking to prevent the fermentation of the dough. "In the early centuries matzo-baking was done by the wife daily, for the household use. In the middle ages preparations were made to bake matzos thirty days before Passover, except the Matzo Sh'miroh ('observance Matzo', prepared with special care for use on the Passover eve by men of extreme piety), which was baked in the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan, at a time when the Passover lamb was formerly sacrificed. Still later, when the community had a communal oven, it was incumbent on the lord of the house to superintend the matzo-baking for his family... About 1875 matzo-baking machinery was invented in England, and soon after introduced into America", where it became an important industry. To keep the matzo from rising and swelling in baking, it was perforated after being rolled into shape, by means of a '*reidel*', or wheel provided with sharp teeth and attached to a handle. "The perforator, usually a youth, would run his *reidel* through the matzo in lines crossed at right angles and about one inch apart. The matzo-

machine has an automatic perforator that makes lines at intervals of a half inch."*

C. REMOVING THE LEAVEN.

While the law regarding unleavened bread is simple, the prohibitions of the use of leaven, or *ḥometz*, during the Pesah week, grew exceedingly complex. Rabbinical law forbids not only the eating of leavened bread but also the derivation of any benefit from it. Every trace of leaven has to be removed before the feast sets in. Hence there arose the quaint ceremony of "*b'dikas ḥometz*—searching for leaven", still observed by orthodox Jews. On the eve of the 14th of Nisan, i.e. on the night before Passover eve, after the evening service, the head of the house deposits crumbs of bread in conspicuous places, on window sills or open shelves, and, taking a wooden spoon in one hand and a few feathers in the other, begins the naive "search for leaven". The children enjoy the privilege of following him with a lighted taper. Blessing God for the command of removing the leaven, he proceeds, in strict silence, to sweep the crumbs into the wooden spoon with the feathers. When the task is done, he makes this solemn declaration, in Aramaic: "All manner of leaven that is in my possession, which I have not seen or removed, shall be as naught, and accounted as the dust of the earth". He then ties the spoon, feathers and leaven in one bundle and deposits it in a safe place. The following morning, after breakfast, he proceeds to burn the bundle of *ḥometz*. This ceremony, known as "*bi'ur ḥometz*—destruction of the leaven", is preceded by a declaration, similar to that

*J. D. Eisenstein art. "Mazza" in the Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. VIII, pp. 393-396.

made on the night before, disclaiming responsibility for any leaven that may still be found on the premises.

The Jewish mystics read a higher meaning into this as into all other ceremonies. Regarding *ḥometz* as the symbol of sordidness and corruption, they beheld in the ceremony of its removal a summons to man to destroy the evil of his heart.

D. "KASHERING" THE UTENSILS.

It is also customary among orthodox Jews to put away, for the period of the feast, all dishes and kitchen utensils that are used for the *ḥometz*, and to replace them with new ones or with such as are especially kept for *Pesaḥ*. Some vessels are retained for the holiday after undergoing the process of "kashering", i.e. of being made fit for Passover use: glass-ware and porcelain are dipped into boiling water, and iron vessels are passed through fire and made hot.

Reform Judaism does not consider these practices essential to the proper observance of the Passover.



Survivals of The Ancient Passover

A. THE SAMARITAN PASSOVER.

The observance of the Passover by the Samaritan sect, native to Samaria, the central region of Palestine, casts much light upon this institution in biblical times. James A. Montgomery gives this interesting outline of the function:

"The solemnity is a veritable Haj, or pilgrim feast. The whole community proceeds to the place of sacrifice on Mount Gerizim, allowing abundance of time for the preparations. The tents are pitched, and all eagerly await the appointed hour, which occurs at sunset,—for so the Samaritans interpret the phrase 'between the evenings'.* A number of lambs have been carefully selected from those born in the preceding Tishri, and of these so many as will suffice for the worshippers are destined for the sacrifice, generally from five to seven, although others are at hand in case anyone of them is ritually unfit. Some hours before the sacrifice two fires are started in the trenches; in one of them a caldron is heated for boiling the water necessary to fleece the lambs, in the other a mass of fuel is kindled to make the oven for roasting the lambs. All these preparations are in the hands of young men,** who sometimes are clad in blue robes. Coincident with the starting of the fire, the service begins and

*Exodus XII: 6.

**Cf. Exodus XXIV: 5.

this is kept up until the lambs are put into the oven; it consists in the reading of the Passover lections from Exodus, and ancient Passover hymns. A certain number of representative men render the antiphons. In the service all turn toward the Kibla, the top of Gerizim. At sunset the sacrifice takes place, not on an altar but in a ditch; the throats of the lambs are deftly cut by a young man, not by the priest. The ritual inspection then takes place, the sinews of the legs are withdrawn,* the offal removed, and the lambs fleeced by aid of the hot water. The lambs are then spitted with a long stick run through their length, and are conveyed to the heated oven, over which they are laid, the spits protruding on either side, while above them is laid a thick covering of turf to seal the oven. The process of roasting takes three or four hours, during which time the worshipers may rest, the service being mostly intermitted. When it is deemed the proper time, the lambs are withdrawn, and present a blackened and repulsive aspect. A short service then ensues, the congregation now appearing with their loins girt up and their staves in their hands,** and when the service is over, veritably 'eat in haste', for they fall ravenously upon the coal-like pieces of flesh, devouring it and taking plattersful to the women and children, who remain in the tents. When all the flesh is consumed, the bones, scraps, wool, are carefully gathered up, and thrown into the still smoldering fire, until all is consumed, 'so that none of it remain till the morrow'. After the meal ablutions take place, and the ceremony is concluded with further prayers and chants. According to the prescriptions of Numbers IX, the 'Second Passover' is allowed.

*Genesis XXXII: 32.

**Exodus XII: 11.

"In close connection with the Passover is the feast of Unleaven, or Massot, which is reckoned as the second sacred feast, being distinguished from the Passover, although coincident with it, according to the language of the Law. On the 13th of the month a careful search is made for all leaven, which is scrupulously removed, and from the 14th day till the 21st no leaven may be eaten. The 21st is the great day of this feast, and on it they make pilgrimage to Gerizim, reading through the book of Deuteronomy on the way and at the village Makkada, where they finally halt."

The Samaritans, pp. 38-40.

B. THE PASSOVER AS OBSERVED BY THE FALASHAS.

The Jews of Abyssinia, known among their neighbors as Falashas, according to Dr. Jacques Faitlovitch, who has visited them and has pleaded their cause before the Jews of Europe and America, celebrate the Passover "for seven days, and during this time they eat only unleavened bread and do not drink any fermented drinks. Several days before the feast, the homes are carefully cleaned, all articles of clothing are properly washed, and all vessels and utensils thoroughly scoured and cleaned like new. Three days before Passover, they stop eating leavened bread and take nothing but dried peas and beans, and on the eve of Passover they abstain from all food until after the sacrifice of the paschal lamb. On this day, a little before the setting of the sun, all assemble in the court of the synagogue, and in the name of the entire community, the sacrificer offers the paschal lamb upon the altar. The ceremony is observed with great pomp; the ritual prescribed in the Bible for this sacrifice is followed punctiliously, and after the sacrifice is slaughtered and roasted, the meat is eaten with

unleavened bread by the priestly assistants. It is in this manner that the festival is inaugurated. On the following days they assemble in the Mesgid ('the place of prayer') at fixed hours, observing a special ritual and reciting various prayers and biblical texts having reference to the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt."

American Jewish Year Book, 5681. p. 89.



Passover and Christendom

A. PASSOVER AND EASTER.

The Jewish Passover, in modified form, became the leading festival of the Christian Church. The English name Easter "is derived from Eostre or Ostara, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of Spring, to whom the month answering to our April and called Eostre-monath, was dedicated. This month, Bede says, was the same as the *mensis paschalis* 'when the old festival was observed with the gladness of a new solemnity' ". In other European languages the name of the festival is derived through the medium of Latin and Greek from the Hebrew *pesah*. The early Christians continued to observe the Jewish festivals, but invested them with new meanings. Thus the Passover, with the new conception added to it of Christ as the true Paschal Lamb and the first fruits from the dead, continued to be observed, and became the Christian Easter.* However, it is incorrect to speak of Pesah as the Jewish Easter, for while Pesah celebrates the deliverance of Israel from slavery, Easter commemorates the death and the legendary resurrection of the Christ.

The Seder, too, has exerted great influence upon Christianity. In his book on Jewish Contributions to Civilization, p.91, Joseph Jacobs writes: "The central

* See the article on Easter in the Encyclopedia Britannica, XIth edition, vol. VIII, pp. 828-829.

✓ function of the Church service, the Mass, (or in Protestant Churches, the Communion), derives its 'elements' in the last resort, from the wine and unleavened bread used at the home service of the Passover; and Bickel (in "The Lord's Supper and the Passover Ritual") has shown that the original ritual of the Mass is derived from that of the Seder service."

B. PASSOVER AND PREJUDICE.

By a strange irony of fate the Passover season, the Spring-time of nature and of freedom, became the signal for the most furious attacks upon the Jews by their Christian neighbors. Unacquainted with Jewish customs and beliefs, many of them maintained an antagonistic and distrustful attitude toward the Jews. Any malicious superstition about Jewish rites found open ears among the ignorant rabble. Hence the care taken in preparing the matzos, and the use of red wine in the Seder service became fruitful sources of wild speculation. These things rendered the coming of the Passover a time of dread and anguish for the Jewish people.

C. BLOOD ACCUSATION.

The distinguished Frenchman, Anatole Leroy Beaulieu, writes feelingly about "that senseless charge which, for centuries, has cost the lives of so many Israelites in every country, although at no time has it been possible to fasten the slightest guilt upon a single Jew."

"In Russia, Poland, Roumania, Bohemia and Hungary, the common people believe that the Jews need Christian blood for the preparation of their unleavened bread, the Passover matzos. In the villages, even in the cities in Eastern Europe, where beneath a thin veneer of

modern culture, so often are found the ideas and beliefs of the Middle Ages, the peasant and the laborer have no doubt that the Jews require the blood taken from Christian veins in order to celebrate their Passover. He does not know, this Magyar peasant or Russian moujik, that, according to the testimony of Tertullian and of Minucius Felix, the same absurd and odious charge was brought against the early Christians by the pagans, who, in their malicious thirst for damaging information, no doubt mistook for a real sacrifice the mystical immolation of the Lamb of the Eucharist. No sooner has a Christian child disappeared, no sooner have the police discovered the corpse of a young boy or girl in the river or in the town-moat, than the public voice accuses the knife of the 'schaechter', the Jewish butcher, even though the body may not bear a single mark of violence. This is so well known that murderers have been seen dragging the bodies of their victims through the alleys of the Jewish quarters, confident, thereby, to divert the suspicion and fury of the crowd."

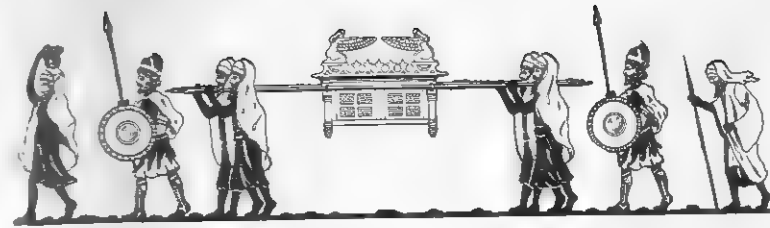
Israel among the Nations, pp. 36-7.
See also Prof. H. L. Strack's article on
Blood Accusation in the Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. II, pp. 260 ff.

D. CHRISTIAN PROTESTS.

Though we live in the bright sunlight of liberty, many of our brethren still dwell in lands of darkness and are still made victims of malice and hatred. The blood libel has been frequently employed against them by their enemies as a means of inciting the ignorant mobs to riots and pogroms. During the notorious Beilis trial, in 1912, the leading British authors, editors, scientists, statesmen and heads of all the Christian denominations issued the following statement:

"We desire to associate ourselves with the protests signed in Russia, France, and Germany by leading Christian Theologians, Men of Letters, Scientists, Politicians, and others against the attempt made in the City of Kieff to revive the hideous charge of Ritual Murder — known as the 'Blood accusation' — against Judaism and the Jewish people.

"The question is one of humanity, civilization, and truth. The 'blood accusation' is a relic of the days of witchcraft and 'black magic', a cruel and utterly baseless libel on Judaism, an insult to the Western culture, and a dishonor to the Churches in whose name it has been falsely formulated by ignorant fanatics. Religious minorities other than the Jews, such as the early Christians, the Quakers, and Christian Missionaries in China, have been victimized by it. It has been denounced by the best men of all ages and creeds. The Popes, the founders of the Reformation, the Khaliff of Islam, statesmen of every country, together with all the great seats of learning in Europe, have publicly repudiated it."



Reform Judaism and Passover

One thing to me is clear: namely, the urgent present duty of all Liberal Jews to observe the Passover. And when I say "to observe" it, I mean to observe it properly with its ancient symbolism and its ancient forms. This means that Liberal Jews must (a) observe the first and seventh day of Passover as days of "rest" and worship; (b) observe the old ceremonial whereby for seven days unleavened bread is eaten at meals. It is also eminently desirable to retain in some modified form the domestic service upon the first night of the festival. . . The Passover celebrates the beginning of the self-consciousness of Israel; the setting forth of Israel upon its mission. . . It is the festival which commemorates the giving of a charge, the founding of a mission, the institution of a brotherhood, which were intended to spread the knowledge of God throughout the world.

Again, the Passover is the festival of liberty—liberty in political life, liberty in moral life, liberty in religious life. How immense the range!

But what is Liberty? It is freedom through law. Passover leads on to Pentecost, the festival which celebrates the giving of the Law.

Claude Montefiore, *Outlines of Liberal Judaism*, p. 254-6.

ISRAEL'S JOURNEY.

Long must be thy journey, O Israel, jubilee-crowned, long must it still continue! But wearied, wearied thou wilt never be! Still in thy native strength dost thou stand, O incomparable one! Still does the youthful blood flow lustily in thy veins! Still awaitest thou with the glowing ardor of battle, the countless hosts thou wilt in the end marshal for thy God. Nor, having marked the path which thou hast trod, can we ever doubt thy signal victory at last. Rejoice, then, in thy natal feast, O Israel, and take from us anew our solemn vows to cling unto thee with undying love and faith for ever!

David Einhorn, Sinai, vol. 1.

FREEDOM.

The high aim sanctified by time and by Judaism is, that all men be free, all recognize God, all employ their spiritual and material powers with full and free desire, so that a throne be built for truth and justice on this earth, a throne which shall adorn the lowliest hut as well as the most glorious palace.

Samuel Hirsch, *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, by David Philipson, p. 487.

Freedom is the indispensable condition of goodness' virtue, purity and holiness. . . Take away freedom from human nature and whatever remains of it is an anomaly, some nameless thing of human form and animal indifference. "Wisdom and cognition", of which the prophet speaks as "the stability of thy times and the fort of thy salvation", are the golden fruits of the free reason, the free-willed man only; they ripen not in the dark and dismal dungeon of the enslaved soul.

Isaac Mayer Wise, *Sermons by American Rabbis*, 1896, p. 181.

THE SEASON OF JOY.

However burdensome the Passover minutiae, especially in regard to the prohibition of leaven, became to the Jewish household, the predominant feature was always an exuberance of joy. In the darkest days of medievalism the synagogue and home resounded with song and thanksgiving, and the young imbibed the joy and comfort of their elders through the beautiful symbols of the feast and the richly adorned tale of the deliverance (the Haggadah). The Passover feast with its "night of divine watching" endowed the Jew ever anew with endurance during the dark night of medieval tyranny, and with faith in "the Keeper of Israel who slumbereth not nor sleepeth". Moreover, as the spring-tide of nature fills each creature with joy and hope, so Israel's feast of redemption promises the great day of liberty to those who still chafe under the yoke of oppression. The modern Jew is beginning to see in the reawakening of his religious and social life in western lands the token of the future liberation of all mankind. The Passover feast brings him the clear and hopeful message of freedom for humanity from all bondage of body and of spirit.

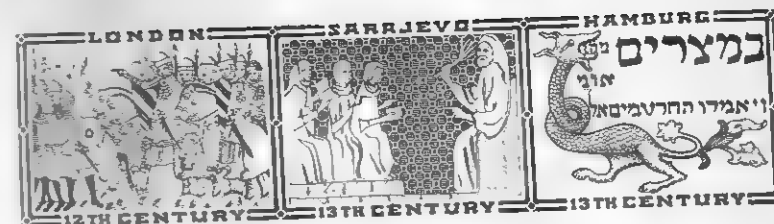
Kaufman Kohler, *Jewish Theology*, p. 462.

THE SECRET OF THE FEAST.

The great redemption holds us with its fascination, but only to bid our hearts go out to all the history of our race. This people "saved of the Lord with an everlasting salvation"—this people that gave the world Moses and the Prophets and the Saints, that has lived and died for God's truth—this people, we say, is ours. We are the sharers of its glories and its humiliations, the heirs to its divine promise and its sublime ideals. This people, we say moreover, began its life with a

protest against wrong. It has lived its life protesting against wrong. And it has done so by moral force alone. Inherently weak, it has been made mighty by its cause, so that "no weapon formed against it has prospered"—neither persecution nor calumny, neither the sword nor the stake, neither the world's enticements nor the persuasive arts of an alien priesthood. Powerful nations have tried to destroy it; but they have perished, while their would-be victim has lived on. We who seemed "appointed to die" are the living history of the dead nations; for their annals are written with pen of iron upon the sacred soul of our race. "This", we cry, "is the finger of God". A people is not thus wondrously preserved to live aimlessly. Still is God's mighty arm outstretched. "As in the days of our coming forth out of the land of Egypt God will show us marvelous things".

Morris Joseph, *The Message of Judaism*, pp.101-2.



The Haggadah

A. THE GROWTH OF ITS LITERATURE.



THE Haggadah, like the feast which it celebrates, is the slow growth of centuries, re-echoing battle-cries of Israel's heroic struggle for life and for freedom. Its oldest stratum consists of the Hallel* wherein triumphal songs, celebrating the deliverance from Egypt, mingle with supplications for Israel's future well-being. These were intoned, at the Temple of Jerusalem, by the Levitical choirs, during the preparation of the paschal sacrifices and were subsequently sung at the table after the festive family meal. Of high antiquity, too, are the blessings over the wine, the Kiddush, the four questions and their answers, based on Deuteronomy XXVI: 5-9. During the century that followed the destruction of the Temple (in the year 70 C.E.), important additions were made to the Haggadah, including the homily of Rabban Gamaliel, the composite prayer of Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Akiba asking for the reestablishment of the sacrificial service, the complete grace after the meal and the Birkas Hashir.**

* Psalm CXIII-CXVIII and CXXXVI.

**Taken to be the Yehalelucho or the Nishmas. See Pesachim X.



As the struggle against the Roman Pharaohs grew in intensity, the Jewish people welcomed into the Haggadah the mathematical disquisitions of the Rabbin Jose the Gallilean, Eliezer and Akiba regarding the number of plagues that were visited upon Egypt. As a protest against their revilers and tormentors, they also embodied into the Pesah ritual the biblical imprecations against the heathens that know not God and devour Jacob and lay waste his habitation.*

The character of the Haggadah was further affected by the theological ideas which Judaism was called upon to combat. An echo of its conflict with early Christianity is found in the strong emphasis laid in the Haggadah on the fact that Israel's deliverance was effected by God in person, without the aid of intermediaries. The further struggle of Judaism against Karaism left a marked impress upon the very structure of the book. On the theory that he who dwells at length on the story of the Passover is praiseworthy, it became customary to include in the Haggadah, passages from the early Midrashic and the Talmudic writings, dealing with the Exodus. In the eighth century, when the Karaitic sect, in its opposition to Rabbinism, excluded these and other passages from the ritual, the masters of the Babylonian academies (the Geonim) took steps to standardize the homiletical sections of the Haggadah. While

*Psalm LXXIX: 6-7; LXIX: 26 and Lamentations III: 66.

the service retained its elasticity for several more generations (as evidenced from Saadia Gaon's and Maimonides' Haggadahs*) the text as drawn up by Rav Amram (about 850 C.E.) was adopted by Spanish Jewry and became the standard for all Israel.

The subsequent additions to the Haggadah consist of its poetic numbers. When the Haggadah began to circulate in separate book form (in the 13th century), it was enriched by Joseph Tov Elem's poem "Hasal Siddur Pesah" (The Order of the Pesah Service is Complete), Jannai's "Vay'hi Ba-hatzi Hallay'lo" (And it Came to Pass at Midnight), and Eliezer Ha-Kalir's "Va-Amartem Zevah Pesah" (And Ye Shall Say: This is the Passover Sacrifice), compositions originally written for other purposes. In the fifteenth century the two anonymous ditties "Addir Hu" and "Ki Lo Noeh" were added. About the same time the folk-songs "Ehod Mi Yodea" and "Had Gadyo" became part of the service, largely under German influence. The Sephardim have refused to admit them into their ritual. The cumulative effect of the varied literature of the Haggadah, of "the curious medley of legends and songs" and prayers, captivated the hearts of many generations of our people and filled them with a sense of special privilege of being part of Israel, the champion of God and of liberty.

B. REFORM JUDAISM AND THE HAGGADAH.

It was but natural for reform Judaism, which found itself at variance with a number of passages in the Haggadah, to construct a ritual for Pesah eve in keeping with its religious principles. Among the German attempts, in this direction, are Leopold Stein's ritual (1841), David Einhorn's (in his Gebetbuch "Olas Tomid", 1858) and S. Maybaum's (1893). An English Hag-

* See A. L. Frumkin's Siddur Rav Amram, p. 213 ff, and Mishneh Torah, Z'manim, Appendix to Hilchos Hometz u-Matzo.

gadah by H.M. Bien, misnamed "Easter Eve", appeared in 1886. The first edition of the Union Prayerbook (1892) contained a ritual for the Seder, based on Leopold Stein's German work. After its elimination from the subsequent editions of the Union Prayerbook, it was published by its author, I. S. Moses, in separate book form. In 1908, the Central Conference of American Rabbis issued the Union Haggadah. The work was executed in a modern spirit, no longer regarding "rites and symbols with the awe that vested them with mystic meaning, or supernatural sanction", but treating them rather as "potent object-lessons of great events and of sublime principles hallowed and intensified in meaning by ages of devout usage". Among the poetic additions to the Haggadah were Leopold Stein's "The Festive Cup" and Jannai's poem "Vay'hi Ba-hatzi Hallay'lo" both translated by Rabbi Henry Berkowitz, and Rabbi G. Gottheil's hymn "God of Might." The volume also contained the familiar Passover music, as edited by the Society of American Cantors, and the setting for "The Festive Cup", composed by the Rev. William Lowenberg.

The aim of the present edition of the Union Haggadah is stated in the introduction. The Committee on Revision reedited both the Hebrew and the English texts of the Union Haggadah and added the following musical numbers: "The Springtide of the Year" by Alice Lucas with the traditional music, as published in the Union Hymnal; "To Thee Above" by James K. Gutheim, with music specially written for it by Hugo Brandt; the traditional "Kiddush" melody with an accompaniment supplied by Rabbi Jacob Singer; traditional settings for Psalms CXIII and CXIV, arranged by D. M. Davis, and the Sephardic Hallel (Psalm CXVII) from F. L. Cohen's "Voice of Prayer and Praise"; a variation of the "Addir Hu"

melody for Psalm CXVIII: 1-4; F. Halevy's settings for the responses "Zeh Hayyom" and "Hodu Ladonoi"; and S. Naumbourg's "Ono Adonoi"; also Alois Kaiser's music for "An Only Kid", from Rabbi William Rosenau's "Seder Haggadah"; and "America". In addition the committee prepared a new Appendix. With the original Committee the present Committee on Revision may lay claim to having been guided by "reverent devotion to the sanctifying force of tradition and a due recognition of its supreme value as a bond of union", in its endeavor to present for men and women of to-day a Haggadah, modern in spirit and social outlook.

C. ILLUMINATED HAGGADAHs.

As the principal ritual work for the home, the Haggadah has enjoyed great popularity. Hundreds of learned scholars delighted to comment on its content, and innumerable scribes to copy and illuminate its text. Since the introduction of printing, the Haggadah has appeared in more than a thousand editions. Of the twenty-five known illuminated manuscript Haggadahs, the Sarajevo manuscript deserves special mention.* Israel Abrahams writes** that "the Sarajevo book must remain supreme as an introduction to Jewish art, so long as it continues to be the only completely reproduced Hebrew illuminated manuscript of the Middle Ages." The still unpublished Crawford Haggadah (now in the Rylands Library, Manchester) rivals the Sarajevo manuscript in point of age and of artistic excellence. "The beauty of the Crawford Haggadah consists just in the text, in the beautiful

* It was published by Mueller and Von Schlossar, 1898, and by Stassof and Guenzberg, 1905.

** By-Paths in Hebraic Bookland, pp. 91-96.

margins, full of spirited grotesques and arabesques, no doubt (like the Sarajevo manuscript itself) produced in Spain under strong North French influence."* In the Sarajevo Haggadah "we have, in the full page drawings, depicted the history of Israel from the days of the Creation, the patriarchal story, Joseph in Egypt, the coming of Moses, the Egyptian plagues, the Exodus, the revelation, the temple that is yet to be."... It is noteworthy that in the revelation picture no attempt is made to depict the Deity. "Into Moses' ear a horn conveys the inspired message; but the artist does not introduce God. ... Certainly the drawings, sadly though they lack proportion, are realistic. Especially is this true of the portrayal of Lot's wife transformed into a pillar of salt. Disproportionate in size, for she is taller than Sodom's loftiest pinnacles, yet the artist has succeeded in suggesting the gradual stiffening of her figure: we see her becoming rigid before our eyes."

Rachel Vishnitzer points out the French Gothic style in the illustrations of the "Two Medieval Haggadahs" of the British Museum.** The one with the fleur-de-lis*** exhibits a rich store of fanciful decorated forms. "There are lions, dogs, peacocks, salamanders, serpents, herons, griffins, hares and so on. Acorns, pomegranates and acanthus-leaves appear with the Gothic ivy-leaf as the prominent floral ornaments; then we can admire on the margins of the fine vellum sheets amusing fights between beasts, hare-hunting, little domestic scenes, caricatures of monks and various grotesque subjects agreeable to the taste of the time, executed with delightful finesse of design and coloring. It is very in-

* Mueller and Von Schlossar describe twenty other extant illustrated manuscripts in their above-named book.

**The Jewish Guardian, April 22, 1921.

***Brit. Mus. Add. 14,761.

teresting, moreover, to observe the skillful master of this unparalleled decoration, when he paints the human form and to see how helpless he becomes then."

"The second Haggadah* is quite different in conception and in the execution of the paintings. We recognize there an honest attempt at faithfully representing nature and of graphic interpretation of scenes from Bible history. The paintings are in keeping with the text of Exodus. Moses at the burning bush, his miracles, the plagues of Egypt, the Exodus from Egypt by the Israelites—all the stages of the story—are minutely depicted."

One of the Haggadahs in the Germanic museum at Nuremberg is especially noteworthy for illustrations of domestic scenes relating to the Seder service. "The fifteenth century Haggadah in the Bibliotheque Nationale has initials and domestic and historic scenes; while an elaborate manuscript in the possession of Baron Edmond de Rothschild has highly original domestic and biblical scenes executed in quattrocento style."**

Since the introduction of printing, about two hundred illustrated editions of the Haggadah have made their appearance. Their styles are for the most part determined by the Prague edition of 1526, of the Mantua edition of 1560, and of the Venice edition of 1599. Though they display a "distinct tendency toward monotony", some of them are not without charm.

The first edition of the Union Haggadah sought "an artistic expression for the Passover sentiment which shall reflect the present era". To this end it reproduced Moritz D. Oppenheim's "Seder Eve", the picture

* Or. 1,404 Brit. Mus., exhibiting much similarity with Lord Crawford's manuscript.

** Joseph Jacobs, Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. VI, p. 144.

of Moses Ezekiel's statue "Religious Liberty" and the "Seder Dish" from Rosenau's "Jewish Ceremonial Institutions". It was also provided with pen-and-ink decorations and with pictures of two reliefs by Miss Katherine M. Cohen. The present edition has retained the three first-mentioned pictures, and has added G. Doré's "The Exodus" and the masterly relief of Moses and the Table of the Law, from an Italian Synagogue, dated 1671, reproduced in the Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. XI, p.663. The book has been further enriched by the decorative frontispiece, borders and lettering specially prepared for it by Mr. Isadore Lipton. He has utilized authentic material from the Egyptian monuments and from ancient Jewish life, for the purpose of making real to our generation the ever fresh story of our deliverance. In his way, he sought to accomplish for the twentieth century what the unknown illustrators of the Sarajevo, the Crawford, the Prague and the Mantua Haggadahs accomplished for their times.

